

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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TAGS: SHUM OAS PA

SUBJECT: REACTION TO OASGA DEBATE ON IAHRC REPORT ON PARAGUAY

1. HEADLINES PROCLAIMED THAT "PARAGUAY HAS OPENED ITS DOORS TO THE IAHRC" AND "THE IAHRC HAS BEEN INVITED TO VISIT THE COUNTRY". HOWEVER, THE STORIES INSIDE REPORTING THE OASGA DEBATE ON THE IAHRC REPORT ON PARAGUAY MADE ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES' INTERVENTION REGARDING AN IAHRC VISIT, FROM WHICH WE CONCLUDE THAT SOMEONE IN THE GOVERNMENT HAD PROMPTED THE PRESS TO PLAY UP THIS THEME.

2. THE ASUNCION PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO THE OASGA PROCEEDINGS AND ESPECIALLY TO THE PARAGUAYAN REPORT DEBATE. ADMITTEDLY THERE WAS A STRONG SLANT TOWARD THE VIEW THAT THE PARAGUAYAN DELEGATION HAD SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED THE COUNTRY'S HONOR AGAINST UNFOUNDED CHARGES. HOWEVER, BOTH WIRE SERVICE REPORTS AND ESPECIALLY "ABC COLOR'S" COMPLETE REPORT FROM ITS SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS IN WASHINGTON PROVIDED ALMOST A BLOW-BY-BLOW ACCOUNT OF THE DEBATE. FOR ANYONE INTERESTED, THE DEBATE'S DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE IN PARAGUAY INCLUDING VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR MACHIN'S CHARGE THAT PRESIDENT STROESSNER MAINTAINS A "STALINIST" GOVERNMENT WHILE WAVING THE BANNER OF ANTI-COMMUNISM. CHAIRMAN AGUILAR'S DEFENSE OF THE COMMISSION'S

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METHODS, HIS INSISTENCE THAT ALL IS NOT WELL IN PARAGUAY, AND HIS CHARGE THAT THE GOP HAD NOT COOPERATED IN ARRANGING AN IAHRC VISIT ARE ALL PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE.

3. THE INITIAL WAVE OF DEFIANCE AND SELF-RIGHTEOUS CONGRATULATIONS, EPITOMIZED BY AN "HOY" EDITORIAL JULY 1 HEADED "COME AHEAD MEMBERS OF THE IAHRC", HAD BARELY CREATED WHEN NEWS OF THE

DEBATE'S DETAILS AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S PASSING OF A CRITICAL RESOLUTION ON THE PARAGUAYAN REPORT BROUGHT MATTERS BACK DOWN TO EARTH. THE JULY 2 "HOY" EDITORIAL COMPLAINED OF DIPLOMATS WHO DO NOT INFORM THEIR GOVERNMENTS PROPERLY OF THE REAL SITUATION IN PARAGUAY, I.E., NO CRIME, NO VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT PROVIDING LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. AT THE SAME TIME, THE OFFICIAL COLORADO PARTY ORGAN "PATRIA" BEGAN MUTTERING ABOUT WHETHER AN IAHRC VISIT IS REALLY NECESSARY.

4. THE PRESS FREEDOM IN RECENT WEEKS HAS BEEN TRULY REMARKABLE FOR PARAGUAY. MOST THOUGHTFUL PARAGUAYANS HAVE WELCOMED THIS AIRING OUT OF PARAGUAY'S HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND HAVE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT WHATEVER IMPROVEMENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES.
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